

A FOOTING IN THE SOIL

LAND-GETTING EMPHASIZED IN THE SOUTH LAND.

Annual Negro Conference at Tuskegee—How Homes and Farms Can be Acquired Told by Men Who Sacrifice Present Comforts for the Future.

Tuskegee, Ala., Special.—The Eleventh Annual Negro Conference has just closed and it was by all odds the most interesting one ever held, both in point of attendance and discussion. There are 2,000 Negro farmers in this County (Macon) alone, and it seems that all of them came and "brought all their relations." Neither was the attendance of a local complexion, but on the other hand, it was highly representative. At this Conference Massachusetts greeted Kansas, and Michigan saluted Florida. Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia were represented. Exercises began this morning at 10 o'clock with a ringing address by Principal Booker T. Washington, in which he reviewed the work of the Conference for the last ten years. He wanted the farmers to feel that the Conference was for them and that the continuance of such meetings is justifiable only in the proportion as they serve to stimulate the masses to greater effort for racial uplift. He said in part: **PRINCIPAL WASHINGTON'S WELCOME.**

"I want you first of all to feel a hearty welcome not to our Institution but to your Institution, for it belongs to you." As an indication of the progress the race is making in some of the more essential things in life, it is interesting to note that at this, the eleventh annual session of the Tuskegee Negro Conference, we will be able to have discussed almost wholly on the part of those who have actually bought and paid for their homes and have no mortgage or any incumbrance resting upon them. Ten years ago this would have been an impossible thing. As far as there is time for it, we are going to have those who have paid for their homes tell us in a simple, straightforward manner the struggle that they have gone through in securing these homes in order that the lesson may serve to encourage those who are yet without property of their own. Next year, perhaps, we can give more time to hearing from those who are intending to buy homes, but this is a practical Conference and the world has not very much time to listen to those who are merely intending to do something, but is anxious to hear from those who have actually done something.

It is with a race as with an individual; the place to begin to make improvements is right where it is. Too many of us expect to buy homes, to cease mortgaging crops, to build school houses and prolong the school term, and have better moral and religious atmosphere in our communities next year or at some far off future time. We want to begin to do these things right now. Or do we expect to wait until we move into some other state

MEN OF THE HOUR.



SIR A. W. LLOYD.

Grand Chancellor of Knights of Pythias of Missouri—His Creditable Work is Commended Everywhere.

or perhaps go North or go to Africa? But I have noticed that the man who cannot buy a home and save money and educate his children in the South seldom does it anywhere. If we cannot improve our condition here I do not believe there are many spots on the earth where we can do so.

The prosperity and usefulness of any race in a large measure, depends upon the ownership and proper cultivation of the soil; especially is this true in the earlier stages of the progress of the race. There is an opportunity open in the South for every black man to purchase a farm and make an independent living upon that farm. Agriculture will give the race the foundation upon which to build and prepare itself for more important things."

After the Principal concluded his address and the Committee on Declarations was appointed, the meeting was turned over to the farmers.

ENCOURAGING REPORTS.

The reports made by them were encouraging in the highest degree and showed what great opportunities the South possesses for the negroes and what downright, earnest efforts are being put forth by those "horny handed sons of toil" to grasp these opportunities. For

nearly four hours, man after man, in rapid succession, told how he, since the first Negro conference, ten years ago, has planned, sacrificed, sometimes lived on bread and water, to get out of debt—to free himself from the curse of the iniquitous mortgage system to reach the climacteric of land ownership.

The genius of these Conferences is that they teach the Negroes to "cast down their buckets where they are," to inspire them with the idea that they have within themselves the element of self-applift.

Here are the words of S. M. Bunnell, of Elmore County, Ala., a delegate to the Conference, and they may be taken as representative of the reports made by scores of struggling souls who have waged unceasing warfare against circumstances which would have crushed men made of weaker stuff.

Mr. Bunnell said, "I had many a hard struggle before I got my home. Many a day I ate bread and water and people laughed at me. I cooked peas and, as I had no meat, I put in a little salt. Sometimes at noon I had nothing but bread to eat and I would chew millet stalks to keep the dry bread from sticking in my throat. I have 160 acres. Last year I

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GRANDER GALVESTON

ISLAND CITY RISING QUICKLY FROM HER RUINS.

More Beautiful and Stately Than Ever—Energetic Afro-Americans Building Churches, Schools, and Homes—Promising Conditions.

LaMarque, Tex., Special.—This is one of the most important suburbs in Galveston County of the beautiful Island of Galveston. It would not be out of place a few years ago to speak of Galveston as the land of beautiful, because there was no city in the South that could with more sincerity be called the Garden Spot of the whole South, and in this place, men and women, whites and blacks, stood as a unit for the building up of their land.

Like ancient Rome, Galveston has had its misfortunes, has had its downfall, was swept out in a night, so to speak. Every newspaper reader in this country will remember the storm of September 8, 1900, when in a single night nearly 10,000 people were swept from the face of the earth, and many homes were destroyed. For weeks after that all the able-bodied men were pressed into service and were kept busy daily digging from the debris, human bodies and consigning them to earth; others were put on large floats and carried out into the ocean and their bodies buried in this manner, and later, in order to get rid of the human bodies, they were heaped up in piles, saturated with kerosene, and their bodies burnt. This was a sickening scene and no human mind can describe it.

The generous-hearted American people, in all sections of the country sent in money and clothes, homes were restored and the industrious people who were left went to work, until today there are but few relics of the storm left. The city is being rebuilt rapidly, and more substantial and better homes are taking the places of those swept away by the storm.

The suffering and loss was not confined to our people alone, but equally as many, if not more, whites suffered, yes, more lives among the whites were carried away by the storm and more white people were left homeless. The Negro shared in the loss, and now he is taking his part in the rebuilding.

Every Negro church was swept away, and they are now putting together their nickels and dimes and building more costly churches than before. The African Methodists suffered great loss and all over the country large collections were lifted to help to rebuild, and two of their churches are now being occupied. The Macedonia Baptist church, of which the Rev. A. Barbour is pastor, also suffered. A little temporary shanty with one door and entirely without windows was erected and services are being held in it.

Well dressed, educated colored men and women crowd in this church every

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